

the River New, a little beyond Dr. Doddridge's meeting house of Northampton, a poor journeyman shoemaker, little thinking that before nine years had elapsed he would prove the first instrument of forming a society for sending missionaries from England to preach the Gospel to the heathen." But the poor journeyman shoemaker was such instrument; and our magnificent modern foreign missionary enterprise is largely the result of what he wrought. It was the noble thought in him that at once rescued him and achieved the wonder.

He would see wilder horizon than Hackleton, Moulton, Northampton, because Christ bade him see it. He would begin to fit himself for possible action in that wider sphere, for Christ might call him to it, and he would be as ready as he could get to be, against that call. So his cobbling-shop became his college. So the Greek and Hebrew of the Scriptures, and other languages which might serve him in that vaster duty, were mastered or begun at.

Meantime, he stood in his small place and did the duty next him faithfully for the Lord's sake. It is not true that he was a poor work-man. The shoes he mended and made were specimens of good handicraft. He taught his village schools, and preached thorough sermons to his peasant people.

He wrought and waited. But all the time the stir of the great thought of obeying his Lord's world-wide command was in him. And so he was more than shoemaker, village teacher, preacher in the thatched cottage.

And when you stand amid the places associated with his earlier and struggling years, you feel the thrill and impulse of a high example; the poor places become lenses to you through which you see a great soul meditating and at last accomplishing great things for humanity. As never before, tarrying in those scenes, it was borne in upon me how more masterful a man may be than circumstance, how true it is that the within makes and molds the instinct. "What will not God do for and with a man who gives himself to God, as William Carey did?" I instinctively asked myself. Cherish high thoughts if you would be high, and do loftily. There is nothing so ennobling as a great thought.

THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

Long years afterwards, when Dr. Carey had demonstrated the feasibility of missions by many converts from the heathen and gathered into Christian churches; when he had translated and published the scriptures in many languages and dialects—forty is the number estimated; when he had thus rendered the Word of God accessible to three hundred millions of human beings; when, beside being what he remained, a humble and devoted missionary, he had also been, for thirty years, an honored and successful professor in the Fort William College in Calcutta, founded and maintained by the English government for the education of the youth of the East; when he was acknowl-

edged chief scholar in the Oriental languages, and when the wide world knew his fame—he said: "There is nothing remarkable in it; it only required perseverance."

He said again to his nephew, Eustace, "If after my removal anyone should think it worth his while to write my life, I will give you a criterion how you may judge of its correctness. If he gives me credit for being a plodder he will do me justice. Anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod, I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything."

Catalogue a little of the multitudinous obstacles which William Carey's persistence overcame.

His own poverty—his tallest income at Moulton was thirty-six pounds a year; afterwards, removing to Leicester, tho his pay as preacher made him a little easier, he had by other labor to supplement his scanty income. One says of him at Leicester: "I have seen him at work in his leathern apron, his books beside him, and his beautiful flowers"—he was an enthusiastic botanist all his life—"in the windows."

The terrible Christian inertness of his time—Thomas Carlyle has named Carey's century "the godless eighteenth century." A kind of spiritual deadness had blighted even dissent.

The distance, the barbarous character of the heathen, the difficulty of providing means, better do work at home, were the stock objections among his own brethren to what they almost universally declared his visionary scheme. Theological objections, too, were plentiful. His idea clashed with the then notions of divine sovereignty, as held by dissenters. "When God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid or mine," was the theological reply his pleadings met. The newness of the whole idea was another obstacle. The hostility of the East India Company was another. Not only his own poverty, but the pitiful poverty of those upon whom he must mainly depend another. I think, in all history, no man has been confronted by greater obstacles. When Napoleon said, "There shall be no Alps," he had an army and a government behind him with which to vanquish them. But here stood this poor, dissenting shoemaker preacher with the Alps before him—alone. I do not think history can match a sublimer courage.

I do not know a place about which holier and more inspiring associations cling than about that "low-roofed parlor in the house of Widow Wallis, looking on to a back garden" in Kettering, England. I stood in it one summer afternoon. In that room William Carey, the holily persistent, at last saw his great idea beginning to take visible shape. In that room, on October 2, 1792, the Missionary Society was organized by twelve dissenting ministers, of whom William Carey was one; and the first subscription of thirteen pounds, two shillings, six pence was pledged.

Space forbids the even hinting at further obstacles which now crowded thick. But contrast those words of Dr. Carey to his nephew, Eustace, when the time was nearing for the aged victor's rest, which I just now quoted, with such beginnings, and estimate a little the splendor of the persistence of William Carey. In the annals of heroism you cannot find a persistence more heroic.

THE SAFETY OF A REASONABLE FAITH

I say a reasonable faith, for that which divides a sane faith from an irrational fanaticism is always this—its reasonableness. Fanaticism is based upon credulity, and credulity is faith without reason. William Carey was no fanatic, because his faith had the sturdiest reason under it. What was that reason? The world-wide command and commission of his Lord. Because his Lord had commanded and promised his presence, William Carey's venture was not a jump into emptiness, much as it at first looked like it. It was a calm enterprise, proceeding upon solidity.

HOW ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD.

All things—even those which mask themselves in disaster. There are many instances of this in William Carey's life.

I select one instance: Mission printing house there in Serampore; such things as these in it—sets of types for fourteen Eastern languages: twelve hundred reams of paper; many copies of Scripture ready for distribution; more valuable than all, many precious manuscripts of translations which could not be replaced; accumulations of twelve laborious years—all in one fateful night gone up in smoke. Sheer and stunning disaster apparently. One of the best events which ever came to William Carey really. At last Christian sympathy and interest in England in missions thoroughly roused themselves when the news came. What the news of wonderful success could not do the news of disaster did. The whole of the money lost was made up in three months. Andrew Fuller writes thus about it from England: "This fire has given your undertaking a celebrity which nothing else, it seems, could."

William Carey's early home region was in the neighborhood of Olney, where Cowper lived and sung. Cowper sung truly of God's dark providences:

The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

He was seventy-three years old. He had wrought in that hot India, with never an absence, for more than forty years. At last fingers would no longer respond to the mandate of the tired brain. His mind was in perfect peace because it "was everything to him that the Gospel was true."

Soon he lay helpless with only flashes of consciousness. Dr. Culross says: "All classes of the community, whether native or European, manifested an affectionate interest in his condition. Lady Bentinck, wife